



Xavier University School of Medicine conducts a “Community Outreach”

This past Saturday, November 19, saw a very busy day in the premises of the Xavier University School of Medicine (XUSOM) located on the Pardenbaaistraat in Oranjestad. The school buildings were bustling with activity as the students, staff, and faculty practiced what they preached when they first opened their doors barely two months ago: community involvement and activism.

The entire day was spent conducting free essential health tests that many islanders neglect to have done on an regular basis, as they should. The students received the practice they need for conducting the tests proficiently, and the benefit to the island residents were obvious. In his opening speech at the launching of the Aruba branch of XUSOM, Dr. Cecil Bennett, head of the board of the school, had described the philosophy of the school as including service and involvement with the island community, and it was displayed on Saturday. Dr. Bennett had traveled in from the school's home base in Atlanta to oversee the day's event.

Well over 200 islanders took advantage of the opportunity to have their eyes checked, blood pressure and glucose levels tested, and an evaluation of their BMI, or Body Mass Index, determining whether individuals are overweight or underweight. After each test and evaluation, the subjects received advice from the doctors-in-training as to where to proceed in the case of any irregularities detected, and some tips as to help alleviated some of the problem. They gave diet and exercise tips, advice for subjects to visit their regular doctor as soon as possible, or even just the tip that using a glare filter on one's computer monitor to help relieve eyestrain for a person with a detected astigmatism was helpful. Each individual received a pamphlet to take home with the results, and an explanation in Papiamento, the native language as to what are normal results and what are problematical and what to do about it. The pamphlet also listed a number of websites for more information about monitoring one's health. Hopefully, those that attended the Community Outreach will take advantage of the testing and information to seek medical care where needed, and to practice preventative habits.

When Dr. Bennett and Dr. Mizani first announced their intention to open a medical school in Aruba they expressed this mission statement:

“The Xavier University School of Medicine will recruit, train and graduate more students from minority and socio-economically underprivileged backgrounds to serve as primary care physicians in medically underserved communities, and to form lifelong learners committed to excellence, faith, leadership, and service.”

School Dean Dr. Gil I. Apacible stated this Community Outreach is only one of many initiatives the school has planned that will involve them with the people of the island that has welcomed them so warmly to its shores.